United Nations S/PRST/2016/4

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 April 2016

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7675th meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 April 2016, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and recognizes the primary responsibility of States in the eradication of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

"The Security Council, in this regard, reiterates the primary role of States in the region to counter the threat and address the underlying causes of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, in close cooperation with organizations in the region, and their partners.

"The Security Council reaffirms its respect for the sovereignty independence and territorial integrity of States concerned.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned about the threat that piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea pose to international navigation, the security and economic development of States in the region, to the safety and welfare of seafarers and other persons, as well as the safety of commercial maritime routes.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the reported number of incidents and level of violence of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea since 2014, and strongly condemns the acts of murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking and robbery by pirates operating in the Gulf of Guinea. The Security Council further calls upon States in the region to cooperate, as appropriate, on the prosecution of suspected pirates and calls upon all States in the region and all relevant stakeholders to intensify their efforts to secure the safe and immediate release of all seafarers held hostage in or around the Gulf of Guinea.

"The Security Council notes the link between piracy and armed robbery at sea and transnational organized crime in the Gulf of Guinea and expresses its concern about the fact that pirates benefit from it.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of determining the existence of any possible or potential links between piracy and armed robbery at sea and terrorist groups in West Africa and the Sahel region, and urges

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Member States and relevant international organizations to assist States in the region, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations in making arrangements to ensure that necessary measures are taken to prevent the revenues generated by acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea from contributing to the financing of terrorism.

"The Security Council notes with concern the damage being done to the economic development efforts and the destruction of essential infrastructure, and urges support for multilateral efforts for the development of an international framework to address issues of crude oil theft and piracy and armed robbery at sea.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of implementing a comprehensive approach led by States of the region to counter the threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as related criminal activities, to address their underlying causes, and to strengthen both justice systems and judicial cooperation in the region. The Security Council recognizes the efforts of the countries in the region in adopting relevant measures in accordance with the relevant framework established by international law to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea and to address transnational organized crime, such as drug trafficking, as well as other measures to enhance maritime safety and security.

"The Security Council emphasizes that regional peace and stability, the strengthening of State institutions, economic and social development and respect for human rights, and the rule of law, are all necessary to create the conditions for a durable eradication of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea.

"The Security Council stresses that the coordination of efforts at the regional level is key to counter the threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea, and also notes the need for international assistance to support national and regional efforts to assist the Member States undertaking steps to address threats of piracy and armed robbery at sea. The Security Council thus encourages the regional organizations, including the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa (MOWCA), to enhance sub-regional, regional and international cooperation on maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

"The Security Council welcomes the holding of and supports the process resulting from the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Central and West African States on Maritime Safety and Security in their common Maritime Domain which took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 24 and 25 June 2013, and the adoption, during the Summit, of the *Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa and Memorandum of Understanding among the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission on Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa*, which encourages the implementation of Code of Conduct with a view to

facilitating the adoption of a multilateral agreement aimed at eradicating illegal activities off the coast of West and Central Africa.

"The Security Council further welcomes the establishment of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC) in 2014 in Cameroon, implementing the regional strategy on safety and security and creating a framework for collaboration among the regional institutions and mechanisms of cooperation, namely ECCAS, ECOWAS, GGC and MOWCA, and also welcomes the establishment of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo, and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa (CRESMAO) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in order to coordinate the work of Multinational Coordination Centres (MCC), in fulfilling the task of the ICC in different zones, with a view to establishing a regional counter piracy and armed robbery at sea coordination mechanism covering the whole of the Gulf of Guinea. The Security Council encourages States in the region to clarify the mandate of and relationship among these bodies, in order to strengthen coordination and cooperation.

"The Security Council, in this regard, encourages States in the region, regional organizations, along with international partners to make fully operational all the regional counter piracy and armed robbery at sea mechanisms, including the ICC, CRESMAC, CRESMAO and MCC as soon as possible, and urges bilateral and multilateral partners to continue assisting States of the Gulf of Guinea with funds, skills, training and equipment.

"The Security Council also welcomes the holding of the Extraordinary High-level Meeting on the ICC by ECOWAS, ECCAS and GGC on 8 to 12 February 2016 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which adopted the documents for the ICC with the expectation of the ICC's full operationalization by July 2016. The Security Council notes the need for logistical and financial resources to implement the projects and programs of the ICC, and in this regard, welcomes the meeting's intention to organize a donor's conference in Yaoundé. The Security Council encourages the regional organizations along with the international community to support the ICC.

"The Security Council encourages States of the Gulf of Guinea to formulate a regional framework for the prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea; reiterates its call upon States in the region to criminalize piracy and armed robbery at sea under their domestic laws, and to prosecute perpetrators of piracy and armed robbery at sea, consistent with applicable international law, including international human rights law. The Security Council further reiterates the urgent need to investigate and prosecute in accordance with international law, including international human rights law, those who incite or intentionally facilitate such crimes, including key figures of criminal networks involved in piracy and armed robbery at sea who illicitly plan, organize, facilitate, finance or profit from such attacks.

"The Security Council urges States and international organizations, as well as the private sector to share information, as appropriate, related to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea in Gulf of Guinea, and to strengthen joint coordination on regional information-sharing.

"The Security Council encourages bilateral and multilateral partners to provide support, upon request and where able, in terms of personnel, funds, technology, training and equipment to States and regional organizations in the Gulf of Guinea, to assist in enhancing their capabilities to jointly counter piracy and armed robbery at sea in the region. These capabilities should include conducting effective regional joint patrols, joint law enforcement at sea, joint anti-piracy drills, joint maritime and air surveillance and other operations in accordance with international law. In this regard, the Security Council encourages States in the region and regional organizations to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with international partners, upon request and where able, to formulate and implement their action plans on countering piracy and armed robbery at sea.

"The Security Council encourages States of the Gulf of Guinea to continue building their capacities to secure waters in the region against piracy and armed robbery at sea, and urges Member States, when requested by States in the region, and where able, to assist States in improving their maritime infrastructure construction and management, including coastal ports, ship supply and repair stations, and fuel depots as well as personnel development, in order to strengthen their capacity to carry out joint maritime operations to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the strong support provided through the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for the efforts on counter piracy and armed robbery at sea by States in the region; and in this regard, encourages UNOCA and UNOWAS to continue to assist States and sub-regional organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation to the West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for its efforts to support maritime security capacity-building in West and Central Africa; and in this regard, encourages Member States to make financial contributions to the West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund, and in cooperation with the IMO at its request, to assist States of the region to develop their national and regional capabilities to improve maritime governance in waters under their jurisdiction; to prevent, in compliance with international law, piracy and armed robbery at sea.

"The Security Council welcomes the initiative of the African Union to hold an Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa in Lomé, Togo on 15 October 2016, which notably aims at adopting a document on maritime safety and security and economic and social development in Africa, and encourages the international community, bilateral and multilateral partners to actively participate and to support it.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General, to support efforts towards mobilizing resources to assist in building national and regional capacities in close consultation with States and regional and sub-regional organizations, and to continue keeping it regularly informed, through SG's UNOWAS and UNOCA reports on the situation of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, including on the implementation of the actions

described in this PRST, especially the progress made in the implementation of the regional mechanisms, the long-term maritime security, maritime governance, and maritime legal coordination, as well as regional and international cooperation on countering piracy and armed robbery at sea."